


A Quaker Detective.
We were five passengers in all; two ladies on the back seat, a middle aged gentleman and a Quaker on the middle, and myself on the one in front.
The two ladies might have been mother and daughter, aunt and niece, governess and charge, or might have sustained any other relationship which made it proper for two ladies to travel together unattended.
The middle aged gentleman was sprightly and talkative. He soon struck up an acquaintance with the ladies, towards whom, in his zeal to do, he rather overdid the agreeable—bowing and smiling and chatting over his shoulder in a way painfully suggestive, at this time of life, of a "crick" in the neck. He was evidently a gay, Lothario.
The Quaker wore the uniform of his sect, and confined his speech, as many a parliamentarian would save his credit by doing, to simple "yeas" and "nays." As for myself, I made it an invariable rule of the road to be merely a looker on and listener.
Towards evening, I was aroused from one of those reveries into which a young man, without being either a poet or a lover, will some times fall, by the abrupt query from the talkative gentleman:
"Are you armed, sir?"
"I am not," I answered, astonished, no doubt, visibly at the question.
"I am sorry to hear it," he replied; "for before reaching our next stopping place it will be several hours in the night, and we must pass over a portion of the road on which more than one robbery is reported to have been committed."
The ladies turned pale, but the stranger did his best to reassure them.
"Not that I think there is the slightest danger at present," he resumed, "only when one is responsible for the safety of ladies, you know, such a thing as a pistol in reach would materially add to one's confidence."
"Your principles, my friend," addressing the Quaker, "I presume are as much opposed to carrying as to using carnal weapons."
"Yea," was the response.
"Have the villains murdered any of their victims?" the elder lady nervously inquired.
"Or have they contented themselves with—plundering them?" added the younger, in a timorous voice.
"Decidedly the latter," the amiable gentleman hastened to give assurance; "and as none of us is prepared to offer resistance, in case of an attack, nothing worse than robbery can possibly befall us."
Then, after blaming his thoughtlessness in having unnecessarily introduced a disagreeable subject, the gentleman quite excelled himself in efforts to raise the spirits of the company, and had succeeded so well by the time night had set in, that all had quite forgotten, or only remembered their fears to laugh at them.
Our genial companion fairly talked himself hoarse. Perceiving which, he took from his pocket a package of newly invented "Cough Candy," and, after passing it first to the ladies, he helped himself to the balance, and tossed the paper out of the window.
He was in the midst of a high encomium on the new nostrum, more than half the efficacy of which he insisted, depended on its being taken by suction, when a shrill whistle was heard, and immediately the coach stopped, while two faces, hideously blacked, presented themselves, one at each window.
"Sorry to trouble you," said the man on the right, acknowledging with a bow two lady-like screams from the back seat; "but business is business, and ours will soon be over, if thing go smoothly."
"Of course, gentlemen, you will spare as far as may be consistent with your disagreeable duty, the feelings of these ladies," appealed the polite passenger in his blandest manner.
"Oh! certainly; they shall be first attended to, and shall not be required to leave their places, or submit to a search unless their conduct renders it necessary."
"And now ladies," continued the robber, the barrel of his pistol glittering in the light of the coachlamp, "be so good as to pass out your purses, watches, and such other trinkets as may be accessible without too much trouble."
The ladies came down handsomely and were no further molested.
One by one the rest of us were compelled to get out, the middle aged gentleman's turn coming first. He submitted with a winning grace, and was robbed like a very Chesterfield.
My own affair, like the sum I lost, is hardly worth mentioning. The Quaker's turn came next. He quietly handed over his pocketbook and watch, and when asked if he had any other valuables, said "Nay."
A Quaker's word is good even among thieves; so, after a hasty "good night," the robber thrust his

pistol in his pocket, and with his to companions, one of whom had held the reins of the leaders, was about taking his departure.
"Stop!" exclaimed the Quaker, in a tone more of command than request.
"Stop! what for?" returned the other in evident surprise.
"For at least two reasons," was the reply, emphasized with a couple of derringers cocked and presented.
"Help!" shouted the robber.
"Stop!" the Quaker again exclaimed. "And if one of thy sinful companions advances a step to thy relief, the spirit will surely move me to blow thy brains out."
The robber at the opposite window, and the one at the leaders' head, thought it a good time to leave.
"Now get in, friend," said the Quaker, still covering his man, "and take the middle seat; but first deliver up thy pistol."
The other hesitated.
"Thee had not better delay; I feel the spirits beginning to move my right fore-finger."
The robber did as he was directed, and the Quaker took his place by his side, giving the new comer the middle of the seat.
The driver who was frightened half out of his wits, now set forward at a rapid rate. The lively gentleman soon recovered his vivacity. He was especially facetious on the Quaker's prowess.
"You're a rum Quaker, you are.—Why, you don't quake worth a cent."
"I'm not a 'Shaking Quaker,' if that's what thee means."
"Of the 'Hickory,' or rather of the 'Old Hickory' stripe, I should say," retorted the lively man; but the Quaker relapsing into his usual monosyllables, the conversation flagged.
Time sped, and sooner than we expected, the coach stopped where we were to have supper and a change of horses. We had deferred a redistribution of our effects till we should reach this place, as the dim light of the coach lamp would have rendered the process somewhat difficult before.
It was now necessary, however, that it should be attended to at once; as our jovial companion had previously announced his intention of leaving us at this point.
He proposed a postponement till after supper, which he offered to go and order.
"Nay," urged the Quaker, with an approach to abruptness, and laying his hand on the other's arm, "business before pleasure, and for business there is no time like the present."
"Will thee be good enough to search the prisoner?" he said to me, still keeping his hand, in a friendly way, on the passenger's arm.
I did so, but not one of the stolen articles could be found!
"He must have gotten rid of them in the coach," the gay gentleman suggested, and immediately offered to go and search.
"Stop!" thundered the Quaker, tightening his grasp.
The man turned pale, and struggled to release his arm. In an instant one of the derringers was leveled at his heart.
"Stir a hand or foot and you're a dead man!"
The Quaker, must have been awfully excited so completely to forget both the language, and the principles of his persuasion.
Placing the other pistol in my hand with directions to fire on the first of the tow men that made a suspicious movement, he went to work on Lothario, from whose pockets, in less time than it takes to tell it, he produced every item of the missing property, to the utter amazement of the two ladies, who had begun, in no measured terms, to remonstrate against the shameful treatment the gentleman was receiving.
The Quaker, I need scarcely add, was no Quaker, at all, but a shrewd detective, who had been set on the track of a band of desperadoes, of whom our middle-aged friend—who didn't look near so middle-aged when his wig was off—was the chief. The robbery had been adroitly planned. The leader of the gang had taken passage in the coach, and after learning as he supposed, our defenceless condition, had given the signal to his companions by throwing out the scrap of paper already mentioned. After the unexpected capture of the first robber, it was attempted to save the booty by secretly passing it to the accomplice, still believed to be unsuspected, who counted on being able to make off with it at the next stopping place.
The result was that both, for a season, did the State some service.
An old gentleman at South Bend, Indiana, swallowed an ounce of laudanum the other day. Being asked his reason for the act, he replied, "Business; I wish to meet General Jackson at four o'clock this afternoon, and I am going to see him." He was pumped out.

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